

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Sharing the Harvest: A Qualitative Study of Farmers' Market Managers' and Vendors' Social Motivations to Accept Food Entitlement Program Coupons

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Farmers' markets are venues that can reflect the activity and composition of the hosting community. Within certain guidelines, WIC, FMNP, and SNAP can be utilized at participating farmers' markets. My study examines how farmers' markets managers and vendors decide whether to accept food entitlement program coupons, especially comparing the decision-making process between participating and non-participating markets. The influence of community ties and addressing local hunger needs in the decision-making process and the level of cooperation in making that decision are also investigated.

Fourteen semi-structured interviews with managers and vendors of eight Midwestern farmers' markets were conducted. Findings indicate that farmers' markets with goals to improve local food security and that are collaborative and seek to build consensus, knowledgeable about food entitlement programs while also holding them in positive regard, and exhibit strong interpersonal relationships between market actors and community residents display greater tendencies to accept food entitlement program coupons.

